

**Narrator:** Ken Edie (KE)

**Company Affiliations:** Manitoba Pool Elevators, Canadian Agriculture Research Committee, Manitoba Rapeseed Association

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**Interviewer:** Beatrice Cherniack (BC)

**Recorder:** Mary Mitchell (MM)

**Transcriber:** Sarah Lorenowich (SL)

**Summary:** Retired vice-president and lobbyist for Manitoba Pool Elevators Ken Edie describes his career in the grain industry through the various positions he held in Manitoba Pool Elevators and on the boards of several organizations, such as Prairie Pools Incorporated, the Canadian Agriculture Research Committee, the Manitoba Rapeseed Association, and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. He describes how his upbringing on a dairy and grain farm helped him during monthly meetings with the farmer cooperative's members, and how he eventually spoke for all of the Prairie wheat pools to the federal government. He describes some of the institutions responsible for Canada's global reputation for high quality wheat, including the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian International Grains Institute, and the Canadian Wheat Board. Other topics discussed include the introduction and acceptance of canola and soybeans as valuable crops, changes to global grain destinations, friendly competition between companies, visits to Manitoba Pool's Thunder Bay terminals, and catching fraud in the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

**Keywords:** Manitoba Pool Elevators; Canadian wheat producers; Canadian wheat farmers; Farmer cooperatives; Farmer meetings; Government lobbying; Prairie Pools Incorporated; Saskatchewan Wheat Pool; Alberta Wheat Pool; Crows Nest Pass freight rate; Grain transportation—rail; Transport Canada; Agriculture policy; Canadian Agriculture Research Committee; Grain research; Canola oil; Canola breeding; Canadian Grain Commission; Canadian Wheat Board; Canadian International Grains Institute; Grain inspection; Grain—laws and legislation; Manitoba Rapeseed Association; Winnipeg Grain Exchange; Grain trading; Thunder Bay terminal grain elevators

| Time, Speaker, Narrative   |
|--|
| BC: Oh, record. There. Ten, eleven. Pretty sure we're on. Right? |
| MM: Yes, you are.  |

BC: The time is going up. Okay.

MM: Yes, and the time is going up.

BC: Okay. So we'll start the interview since we've got the tape going.

KE: Okay.

BC: I start by introducing myself. I'm Bea Cherniack, and I am the person who will be speaking to Mr. Ken Edie this morning. It's November the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. So we always start the interview by having you give your name and how you came to work in the grain trade.

KE: My name is Kenneth Edie, and we were dairy producers. We gave that up and went strictly into grain production, and I became the vice president of Manitoba Pool Elevators [MPE].

BC: Okay. We'll go back right to the beginning again. Dairy producers. Did you grow up on a farm or--?

KE: Very much so.

BC: Can you tell us a bit about that? Where was the farm and how long did your parents farm?

KE: Well, it was two miles west of here and a mile and a half north.

BC: Of Dugald?

KE: Of Dugald.

BC: And what kind of farm was that when you were growing up?

KE: Well, when I was growing up, we had dairy, and it shifted into grain production. As time went on and the sons were able to run the farm, I didn't literally move into the city, but that's when my focus was in the grain trade, which is on Lombard Avenue where the Grain Exchange was at that time.

BC: And were there a number of--. You said you were one of the sons on this farm?

KE: Yes.

BC: How many of the family continued farming or being in the grain industry?

KE: Now, only one nephew, Wayne, is farming on quite a large scale. You see the elevator out here?

BC: Mmhmm.

KE: He bought that, and so he can ship producer cars from there, and neighbours can ship producer cars. The Canadian Grains Commission [CGC], if you own the company, then you get into a whole bunch of bureaucracy, but by just charging a tariff then you're okay. Neighbours and friends will line up and haul grain, and because there's so many bins, they can keep you segregated until they get enough rail cars.

BC: And that's in 2011 that's happening?

KE: Oh, yes. It started about five years ago, and it's getting more popular all the time. What Wayne does, he has a couple of semi-trailers on the road, and the grain he produces and purchases without owning it, and he hauls a lot down into the United States—wheat, barley, canola, flax. There's not much variety around here.

BC: Okay. We'll go backwards again, taking you back to you were on the farm, and you mentioned that your focus became on Lombard after the farm, and you had a brother who then farmed?

KE: Yes.

BC: Okay. So there were two boys that carried on in the grain industry out of your siblings?

KE: Well, there were six in the family, and I was the youngest.

BC: Oh, my goodness.

KE: And of course, after they made all the mistakes with the other five, I was raised perfectly because they knew what to do.  
[Laughing]

BC: All right. So out of the six how many were in the grain industry?

KE: None, directly. They were producing grain, but not being involved in policy.

BC: Okay. But they farmed?

KE: Yes. And--.

**[0:05:05]**

BC: And then you went onto--?

KE: Once the family was big enough to manage the farm, I didn't physically move—because we're not that far away—and got involved in all aspects of the grain trade.

BC: So what was your first job?

KE: My first job was vice president of Manitoba Pool Elevators.

BC: Oh, okay. And did--.

**[...audio skips]**

KE: An Agricultural Diploma from the University of Manitoba, which enabled you to--. What you learn is not important because you'll forget about it, but the contacts you make and professors at the university, they all liked us because we were, in effect, right on the ground. So they wanted to know what theories they had were right and what was wrong and what was the best way to go into their research programs.

BC: That's great. That's really good. So you graduated with your diploma, you went to work for Manitoba Pool.

KE: Well, not right away because I spent about ten years milking cows. We gave up the bad habit of milking cows about 1975, then we carried on with the grain.

BC: So when you did go to work at Manitoba Pool, can you describe your job, your first job there, your duties?

KE: As I said, I was first vice president, and what we did was if you wanted to know something about the workers, go and talk to them. That was my job, to go and say, "This is working. This is. What should we do to improve it?" And I'd take that back to head-. [...*audio skips*] Real farmer who is in the industry and could help them sort out their problems. They really like to see you come because they would say, "Well, you're doing this wrong and that wrong." "Okay, what should we do? Do it this way?" So then I'd take that back and say, "Here is the problem, and here's how we can solve it."

BC: Would you call meetings in certain districts? How would you find people to talk to?

KE: In the Manitoba Pool system, they had regular monthly meetings of the interested people who were interested in Manitoba Pool. They made up a board, and they had a president, of course. They just always felt that now they had somebody to talk to who understood farming and what should be done in research and technology situations.

BC: And you were the vice president of Manitoba Pool for how many years?

KE: I would guess seven.

BC: Okay.

KE: Then went on. We had Alberta Wheat Pool, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Manitoba Wheat Pool. We created something that we could get together and talk about what's going on. Then eventually, we started a lobbying process, and I was the lobbyist that was registered in Ottawa, then I could go down there and point out to our Ottawa friends some things they could do better, [laughs] in regards to the grain industry.

BC: So were you hired by the group to then become a lobbyist?

KE: Yeah. Well, as I said, there was Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and we put what got called Prairie Pools Incorporated, and I was chairman of that.

BC: Around what year would that have been?

KE: '75 we quit milking cows. I would say about 1980.

BC: And what was changing in the industry at that point that would suggest that you would go in that direction?

KE: Well, the government was changing, and there was something called method of payment, and there was great controversy amongst farmers as to how that should be organized.

**[0:10:03]**

BC: Can you tell me what method of payment was? Can you talk about that concept and then the farmers' reaction?

KE: Well, okay, the method of payment. When the Crow Rate subsidy stopped, then there was a great controversy—a kind of tribal war—about what should be done to carry on from there.

BC: And what were they suggesting that should happen?

KE: Well, they wanted to be able make contact directly with Ottawa.

BC: The farmers?

KE: Well, yes. It fell upon me to be the one that had to go to Ottawa six times a year to try and keep the government in line. One of the things we found out very quickly was Transport Canada was not interested in the consumers of oil, grain, sulphur, whatever. They were only interested, Transport Canada was interested, that the railways made money. We thought that was kind of a narrow focus.

BC: So you were a lobbyist for how many years?

KE: Four or five, I guess.

BC: And at that time, you said you were the chairman of the Prairie Pools--.

KE: Incorporated.

BC: Incorporated. Was that a fulltime job for you?

KE: Yes.

BC: Okay.

KE: Very much so.

BC: And that was for about seven years?

KE: About that.

BC: Is there a lobbying group to this day? Does this still exist?

KE: Yes, in a number of ways.

BC: It took some different forms afterwards?

KE: Well, I wouldn't say it took different forms, but when I left, there were various lobbyists, and I knew them. I'd give them bits of advice as to how to get your ideas through the bureaucracy in Ottawa.

BC: Who would the other lobbyists be at that point? Where would they represent?

KE: Well, I really don't know how to answer that question, but I just know there were a great deal. One named Barry Senft from Saskatchewan, and he became the manager of something called CIGI, which is the Canadian Industrial Grains [*Note: Canadian International Grains Institute*]. And the way that worked—which people couldn't understand it—was we would bring, at our cost, at Canada's cost, people from foreign countries to come and see how the Canadian grain industry worked. It's sort of like you think that's giving away intellectual technology, but what did happen, these people understood the Canadian grains industry, and they went back to their home countries. They knew who to contact to get the grain they wanted, the quality, because they trusted CIGI, which is C-I-G-I. It's an acronym.

We saw time after time where these people would come not knowing anything about Canada or about our grains industry, and because they felt confident that we knew something, there were huge orders. There was 50,000 tonnes of canola ordered after they came with nutritionists saying what wonderful stuff canola oil was. They would buy very confidently.

BC: Oh, good. When you left the Prairie Pools Incorporated, where did you next go in your career?

KE: Well, there was something called the Canadian Grains Industry, and I became a member of the board. That was all grain from Vancouver to Newfoundland. There's no grain in Newfoundland. It's pretty hard to grow grain on a rock. [Laughing]

BC: Yes!

KE: It was just very interesting because then you got all sorts of domestic policies, and you just worked.

**[0:15:00]**

BC: So it sounds—and you can correct me—but it sounds like you were a person who was very interested in systems and policy and the big picture?

KE: Yes.

BC: Of the grain industry.

KE: And one of the best things they said was I listened to everything carefully and then looked at both sides and made a suggested direction to go.

BC: Well, that's good. I'm going to be moving back and forth--.

KE: That's okay.

BC: In your--. So after the Canadian Grain Industry board, where did you go?

KE: Well, one thing which is different was a thing called CARC, Canadian Agricultural Research Committee. The focus of that group was to look for duplication where two people were studying the same thing, and they're both going to come to the same



conclusion, but it costs twice as much money to have them. So that was why we had CARC, and I was on the board for a number of years. I had to go to Ottawa again. That's about it.

BC: And did you do any other positions? I'm trying to go all the way up to your retirement, and I don't know if I'm anywhere near it yet. After CARC?

KE: Well, I took about five years at CARC, and then I decided I'd had enough public exposure. [Laughs] Came home to be with my grandchildren.

BC: So that's when you officially retired from the grain industry?

KE: Well, it says in here. The last paragraph says, "I was very pleased and encouraged because--."

MM: "It was an opportunity that we were able to put together to get a Prairie-wide presence and be able to compete with the new players that are coming up into Canada, particularly through the United States."

KE: Particularly the United States.

MM: Just looking at whether you have--. You said you worked in a very public business for 19 years.

KE: Mmhmm.

MM: So that would be from 1975, did you start?

BC: That's when you worked at the Manitoba Pool.

KE: Yes. Just as a sideline, just kind of interesting, but rapeseed oil, it had a couple of amino acids and high glucosinolates and a flavour that the animals didn't want to eat it. So Dr. Bell of Saskatchewan—a Saskatchewan doctor—was in need of, anyways, another medical doctor. The fellow, he was a doctor, but not--. Like he had a PhD, but it was to do with agriculture. Anyways, the two of them got together and bred out the glucosinolates and erucic acid which were no good until finally--. And Canadians still didn't think this was good enough for them. Then Proctor & Gamble in the United States hired Mother Walton. Do you remember the Waltons?

BC: Oh.

KE: Well, it was a sort of a soap opera show, but she was very popular, and she said, “I would only feed my children Canadian canola oil.” Of course, that had to go through a great long [inaudible]. It took about two years to get that through, and they managed to keep it out of politics because once you get into politics--. It was based on science. And we had one of our highly placed doctor of science, and they had one, and they worked through it, and they said, “This is okay.” Of course, in that time, it was a Ma Perkins kind of a show. Mother Walton said, “I would only feed my children Canadian canola oil.” So once it was accepted by the Americans, then the Canadians said, “Well, it might be okay for us too.”

**[0:20:11]**

BC: And that’s become a very, very strong product.

KE: Oh, absolutely. Like we had one of these people somewhere, a couple of—well, they’d be 25-, 26-year-old women—nutritionists from China, and when China accepted it, and the US accepted it. Canadians finally decided, “Well, yeah. Maybe it’s okay for us too.”

BC: To use it, yes.

KE: And the resulting--. Canola now in revenue exceeds wheat in dollars brought in, and also of course, you’ve got to look at--. Revenue is one thing, profits are another because you’ve got to take off all your expenses. And every way you look at it, canola is now making more money per acre for farmers than wheat, and Canada was acknowledged at the time to have the best wheat in the world. It was called hard red spring. The better the wheat, the better the flour, therefore the better the bread.

BC: I’m going to go to another question because I know we're actually weaving our way through these questions as we speak. I think an interesting section to talk to you about would be the connection with other segments of the grain industry because it sounds like you were a policy person. You were in Ottawa. You also had your farming background. So I guess I’m asking you generally—because you’ve now described three, four, five aspects of your career—what would be the connections you saw between the work you did and the producers which were the farmers? Or I guess that’s one of the producers.

KE: Well, there again because I knew about farming, other farmers accepted the recommendations that I might make and work its way up through to head office. Head office is sometimes pretty slow. Bureaucracy is not willing to change because one of the unfortunate things is—and is still, in effect—the more people that report to you, the more money you make. So they’ll go out of

their way to create meaningless jobs because then they make more money. Any person in business doesn't view it that way. Seniority is the greatest thing in government, and seniority doesn't play a role. It's ability. Someone may have five years' experience and they still don't know anything, and someone may have 20 years' experience and have a good grasp on things.

BC: Another category is the--. And I guess I'm asking you to give broad answers because we're going over the whole span of your career here. I guess I'm asking you for your opinions, your conclusions, about how all these different parts of the grain industry interacted. Because the next one is the carriers.

KE: The carriers?

BC: Carriers. And I think they mean by that probably--.

KE: The railways.

BC: The railways and the shipping.

KE: And trucks.

BC: Trucks and shipping.

KE: Because we're such long ways from saltwater, it's mostly railways. As I said, Transport Canada didn't care about the people using the railways. They wanted to make sure Transport Canada made lots of money.

BC: Did government play any role in that?

KE: Well, of course. Government has a role in everything.

BC: What was your experience over the years in how they handled that?

KE: Well, that's why I was registered as a lobbyist.

BC: And what did you think they should be doing differently?

KE: I'd suggest to them ways they could go that would be more productive for the grains industry in Canada and the US because we ship a lot of wheat, and still do, into the US. One of the things is the further north you go where we can still grow a good crop, the better the grain is, as long as you don't get caught by frost. Well, the original Red Fife that the Selkirk settler started with, it took about 110 days to mature, whereas now it can mature in 90 days and still give a good product.

**[0:25:29]**

BC: So over the span of your career, I guess, the railroad it went east-west, and you're saying a lot went south, and then with the Crows Nest. A lot of interest in this project comes from Thunder Bay.

KE: Yes. Well, we had a terminal in Thunder Bay, and we'd visit it once a year because they felt isolated from Winnipeg where the grain trade was, and they were so happy to see somebody who could get the problems in Thunder Bay get back to the Winnipeg head office.

BC: So over your time you would've, of course, seen the shift between so much grain going through Thunder Bay and it shifting out to the west.

KE: Yeah. Well, that's a matter of economics. By and large, Europe doesn't need our grain much any more. In fact, they've got all sort of tariff barriers around it, so more goes to Vancouver for Japan and China. Russia at one time was buying 3 million tonnes of wheat a year, and they would've taken more because they had a crop failure because they've had a crop failure ever since 1917 when Communists took over. That was when we would ship the grain out through Churchill because it's very short to get to northern Russia. Then they would take it from there.

BC: And now Russia is not as big of a customer?

KE: No. No. Russia, since they got over their absolute dedication to communism, has made great progress in research. It's a huge country, so they bred different varieties that worked better than others. Soybeans are a good crop, and we could never grow soybeans because soybeans are a southern crop. But with the breeding we got now, people are really doing well with soybeans also. Soybeans, of course, as a legume, will leave nitrogen and leave it in the ground, so it helps reduce the cost of fertilizer. The price is very, very good.

BC: So that's a strong crop now in Canada?

KE: Yes. And it's growing every year as people get to believe it, that it will work, and that they can grow them. We had a national convention last year we called the Nuffield Foundation, and it's right from—well, Newfoundland's not in it—but Prince Edward Island to Victoria. We talk about all the different things that--. We would talk to each other, and we just had the conference last week.

BC: So you're still involved in the grain industry at some point?

KE: Oh, yes. Yes.

BC: And you always will be? It sounds like it's a passion of yours.

KE: Well, yes.

BC: Again, I'm going back to the connection with segments within the grain industry. The handlers, now that would be--. You worked for Manitoba Pool, and you talked about the other Pools that you then got together to have discussions. Can you talk about the relationship between perhaps the Pools and the private grain companies?

KE: Well, although we were all competitors, we all have receptions, and we all were friends, and we'd talk to each other and not try to give away too much information. We'd try not to give away information. But on the whole, it was very useful, and everybody appreciated the opportunity to get together and talk to each other. I think there was National Grain, and Parrish & Heimbecker, and Pioneer, UGG [United Grain Growers], and of course Manitoba Pool. They were all happy to get together, have a good time.

BC: Did you see any changes in how business was done over the years?

**[0:30:01]**

KE: Do you mean from then until now?

BC: Mmhmm.

KE: Well now there's only three elevator companies—Viterra, Pioneer, and Parrish & Heimbecker—and it's not their fault, but they're spread out so wide that it's difficult for them to get together except when we had our grain parties.

BC: Now what would be--. We talked about the Pools and the private grain companies. What would their relationship be to the Canadian Grain Commission?

KE: Well, the Canadian Grain Commission is, in effect, the police of the industry making sure quality is kept. And they also have what they call assistant commissioners go out and check the elevators to see that they're not stealing grain, that they're grading it properly. That was very useful to keep the--. And they were, in effect, the quality control people that kept the quality up and that people, foreign buyers, could know that what they ordered, they got. If they wanted low price wheat, fine. It was segregated, and they got that. If they wanted high price wheat, that was segregated, and they knew it was good. When the Grains Commission put their stamp on it that it was good, they wouldn't accept any argument because they said, "We're right. That's it." And people soon found that, yeah, that was right. They didn't have to worry about quality concerns because what they said they wanted--. The winter wheat is a lower quality, but it's better for feed because you get more of it. You wouldn't make bread out of it. That's about it.

BC: So the Canadian Grain Commission do you believe still has a role in--?

KE: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

BC: Which then brings me to the topic of the day in Canada.

KE: Mr. Ritz?

BC: Well, the role of the Canadian Wheat Board [CWB]. What's your opinion on that?

KE: Well, the Canadian Wheat Board did a lot of good because they could maintain quality. And barley, which of course is used in making beer, it had to be a certain quality. So the Commission made sure that those things were always right, and people didn't have to--. What they ordered is what they got. If they wanted less cost grain, they got that. And the higher quality grain, if they were willing to pay for it--. Because they knew when the Canadian Grain Commission put their stamp of quality on it that they got what they wanted.

BC: And with the Wheat Board being the single desk that it all went through, what is your opinion on the role of that?

KE: Well, it was good in its time, but now there's no use trying to maintain a Wheat Board because everything's--. Like they could organize it--. The barley had to meet certain standards, and there was always almost a lottery as to who got to get that barley because it paid so well.

BC: What structure do you see them putting in place to take our grain to the international grain trade? What will be the method that you think would work?

KE: Oh. I just think it will work because the Commission now regulates if any traders are being fraudulent. When about four went to jail, when we got the proposal, and it was enacted, there was four traders went to jail for fraud.

BC: Could you talk about that more? When this was and how that happened? Who brought it to the attention of the--. Like I don't know anything about this particular thing, so I need background.

**[0:35:13]**

KE: Well, I don't know what more I can say.

BC: Well, they were grain traders for private companies?

KE: Yes.

BC: But who would have noted--. Was it the Canadian Wheat Board or the Grains Commission that noted that this was happening? Because you're talking about the checks and balances in the system, so somewhere in the system, it caught these people doing this.

KE: Well, now, it's really by competition between the companies and the grain buyers and the grain traders. But still, the Grain Commission puts its stamp on--. You want lower priced wheat for feeding animals, you want high price wheat for making good bread, they still will keep that sorted out. Now they need more matter of competition between players.

BC: Okay. The other connection in the grain industry were the purchasers, and you've mentioned Russia was a customer, and now Japan and the Asian countries are bigger customers. Over your long career, you saw the market shift.

KE: Yes. Europe sets up a whole bunch of conditions and that on genetically modified products, and there's no reason for it except they just don't want to sell any grain into Europe. Japan and China, they want grain, and they don't worry about such things. The Commission checks the grains for too many insecticides and gives their stamp of approval, and so they're happy to deal with Canada in China.

BC: So those are our biggest customers right now you think?

KE: Yes. China is the biggest customer at the moment.

BC: Okay. You just touched on that Manitoba Pool did have an elevator in Thunder Bay. Do you have any other thoughts on the operations in Thunder Bay?

KE: Well, we went every year, the board, and they always liked to see us because they felt isolated from head office.

BC: And is there still a Manitoba Pool elevator in Thunder Bay?

KE: There's an elevator, but I don't know what it's called. Like, Bunge is big in Canada now, and the names have all changed. There's Parrish & Heimbecker and--.

BC: They've all folded into very few. Right. Did the Manitoba Pool have a research component to the Business?

KE: It did, yes.

BC: Was it a large part of the business or a small part?

KE: Well, it didn't really cost much money to do the research, but what research did come out was very valuable.

BC: So it played its role. You mentioned the grain scientists. Certainly, they weren't at Manitoba Pool, but they were able to impact on the change in the canola. If you look back over your career, what were the major challenges you felt you faced?

KE: [Laughs] I guess the major challenges were to keep the various parts of the organizations from--. The challenges were being met by people who knew things. As the head of a company, you don't have to know very much, but you have to hire good people. The bureaucracies in Ottawa, the more people that report to you, the more money they make, so they create a whole bunch of useless information for people to work on. They go to meetings and back and forth and round and round. That's not how business works. If someone's got one year's experience in doing the job, fine. If someone's got 20 years of experience and doesn't know what they're doing, then they're gone.

**[0:40:21]**



BC: Looking back on the various—you may have more than one answer to this—but looking back on the various jobs that you did in the grain industry, what are you most proud of?

KE: I think in getting Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta to be created as one company, so then when I went to Ottawa, I could be seen as speaking on that segment of the industry, which at that time was about 75 percent of the grain produced.

BC: Okay. And what part of the history of this whole industry do you think is important to preserve and to share with the public that you would like people to know?

KE: Well, the important thing is that the Grain Commission is there and keeps quality control up. They've got such a good record, and when people on the Grain Commission say this grade is this grade--. If you want lower grades for animal feed, it's all sorted out, and that's the role of the Commission, and of course, it will stay there.

BC: Now are there any questions or any part of your career that we haven't touched upon?

KE: I don't think so. You can read it all there.

BC: Maybe we can have a look there and just see. Any questions that I should have asked that I didn't think of? [Laughing] While we're looking over the article on you, do you have any photographs or memorabilia that you think--?

KE: Oh, certainly. Like, you want to photograph that, that's fine.

BC: Yeah. That kind of--.

KE: And there's no copyright, so you don't have to worry. [Laughing]

BC: Thank you! I'll ask the last question, because as you said, everybody in the grain industry that were there for a long time knew each other. Is there anyone else that you think we should interview?

KE: Well, there's no use talking to Mr. Ritz. He's got a one-track mind.

BC: Mr. Ritz was the--?

KE: He was the one who was most determined to eliminate the Wheat Board monopoly.

BC: Oh, right. Okay. Yeah. Anyone else you worked with that you think would--?

KE: Allan Dawson, who's a reporter, still is a reporter. I spoke to him. He's a very good reporter, and he's very thorough in watching everything he said, looking at it from the sides. To me he was always right on with the challenges.

BC: And who does he write for? The *Manitoba Cooperator*?

KE: *Manitoba Cooperator*.

BC: Okay.

KE: I think now he works out of his own home, which is down around Morris or something.

BC: Oh, okay.

KE: But he's at--.

BC: Okay, good.

MM: The article here talks about your involvement in the Manitoba Rapeseed Association as a founding father of that association.

KE: Yeah, I was the founding president of that.

MM: Yes, from 1970 to 1974. Do you have anything more that you wanted--? You talked about canola being now an important--.

KE: This is irrelevant but when we wanted to change the name from rape to canola, we said, "You're going to see women something that starts with rape? I don't think so." So that's why we went as canola. "Well, that's fine." Actually, the rapeseed word comes from a German. The roots of that language go back to the German language, and all it meant was that there were turnips and that and they all came under the name of rapeseed oil.

BC: Oh, okay. And just for the record, the co-interviewer is Mary Mitchell. So when you heard another voice come in at that point--. We at this point are looking at an article written about Mr. Ken Edie in the *Manitoba Cooperative* on the occasion of his retirement, and this is dated January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000. And we're hoping to be able to get a copy of this for our archives.

**[0:45:31]**

KE: Also, we said big railways, big troubles for farmers. I mentioned the trouble we had with the railways, so that outlines the problems with big railways.

BC: Okay, that's good.

MM: It also mentions here another research organization, the Canadian Agriculture Food Research Council, Canadian Agri-Food--.

KE: Yes, I was on the board of that for a while too.

MM: What is its role?

KE: Well, they were looking to prevent duplication. Like somebody in Saskatchewan was doing something and in Manitoba, and they're both doing the same thing, both come to the same conclusion, so why not just have an organization which says, "Yes, these conclusions are brought forward by a great number of people." The Grain Commission says quality control, and there's no more problems.

MM: Now it also talks here in 1972, you were appointed as the first public governor of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

KE: Yes.

BC: That's right. You haven't talked about that. Tell us about that.

MM: Which is now the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange.

KE: Yes. Actually, it's ICE Futures now, but it's the same organization.

MM: Yes.

KE: I used to write a lot of letters, and I wrote a letter to the chairman of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. Of course, he said, “Okay, come and help us.” So that was in the--. By and larger, the traders didn’t want regulation, and the Futures Act had been proclaimed, but wasn’t initiated. One of the gentlemen there was a very honest gentlemen, and he loved the interplay of things, but if it hadn’t been for him, we couldn’t have got the documents ratified.

BC: And who was that?

KE: Bill Purves.

BC: Okay.

KE: He and his brother ran something called Inter-Ocean Grain. They had about 20 elevators in Manitoba. But he was one of these people, what’s right is right. He knew that there was problems, but he couldn’t get the other ones to agree to help him. Or when there was columns in the paper on the--. People thought I had gone crazy. “Why would you join up with those bunch of crooks?” Well, see if we can improve it, which happened.

BC: That’s good.

MM: So then it says here, “Under federal legislation passed in 1938, the Canadian Grain Commission was to supervise trading, but that act was not proclaimed until the mid-’70s.”

KE: That’s right.

MM: And that’s when you said some folks were prosecuted if they were fraudulent trading.

KE: Yes. Yeah.

MM: “Because outside scrutiny helps ensure traders play by the rules, giving farmers and the public more confidence. And it wasn’t until the 1980s when the Grain Commission uncovered a litany of fraudulent activity by unscrupulous traders that had cost the farmers millions of dollars.”

KE: Mmhmm.

BC: Okay. Well, I think we've covered everything, and we very much appreciated this interview. So we'd like to thank you.

KE: Well, I enjoyed it. I was kind of hesitant about getting into this because I was away from home so much. They'd say, "What's that guy doing? Why isn't he staying home and looking after his farm?" Well, what I did find out was that being involved in industry, it paid much better than farming.

BC: It sounded like you had a very valuable point of view to bring to the industry too.

KE: Thank you.

BC: So I thank you. That was good.

MM: So--.

**End of interview.**